

# IN THE WORKS

*TUNE IN HERE FOR NEWS ABOUT PERSONNEL SYSTEM REFORM IN WASHINGTON*

July 2004

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## NEW DEPUTY TO JOIN LABOR RELATIONS OFFICE



Steve McLain was hired on July 14 to fill the position of deputy director for the state's Labor Relations Office. This position was left vacant on June 21 when the governor named former deputy director Eva Santos to the position of chief negotiator.

"Steve will be a welcome addition to our team," said Santos. "He brings a fresh perspective and a wealth of skills, both in leadership and negotiation."

Before McLain joined the Labor Relations Office, he worked as a Manager and Regional Administrator of the southwest Washington region for the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries.

McLain's career in state service spans more than 20 years. He has worked for the Employment Security Department, the State Auditor's Office and for the State's Attorney General. He has nearly 15 years of direct experience in personnel and labor relations.

"I've had the opportunity to work within the old civil service system as a human resource professional, as well as use it to manage staff directly," said McLain. "I hope to use this experience to ensure that the new contracts will improve our ability to get the critical jobs of government done." ★

## BARGAINING UPDATE

The governor's labor negotiators, under the direction of Eva Santos, are continuing to meet with the unions representing state employees. Proposals now have been exchanged with all unions.

"I feel very positive about the process," said chief negotiator Eva Santos. "We are experiencing the normal give and take in bargaining. As we continue to bargain in good faith, I am confident we can reach agreement on fair contracts."

Negotiations on the amount the state will pay on behalf of each employee for their health benefits will resume in August. To reach agreement on health benefits, management will be negotiating with one large coalition representing all the unions.

The final health coalition agreement will then apply to all state employees represented by labor unions.

The fiscal terms of all the contracts are due to the Office of Financial Management by October 1, 2004. Contracts will go into effect July 2005.

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## CIVIL SERVICE RULES ADOPTED

No matter how you look at it, the rule-writing team at the Department of Personnel (DOP) has cause to celebrate. On July 29, sixteen new chapters of rules will be put up for adoption by DOP director Gene Matt. The new rules support a modern, flexible personnel system.

“This has been such a great experience,” said Sandi Stewart, rules manager. “We have had the opportunity to redesign the look and feel of the civil service rules, many of which have been in place for decades, as well as make the format more usable for the average employee.”

To get to this point has taken two years of hard work, including a lot of research, extensive revisions and stakeholder involvement. As a result of usability tests on the initial draft, Stewart and her team changed to a more easily understood, question-and-answer format for the rules.

### Still more to be done

“Even though we’ll be taking a little breather,” Stewart said, “we have plenty more to do this fall. We’ll be looking for feedback from the HR professionals as they write their new internal policies to follow these rules and develop their implementation strategies. There may be some adjustments that need to be made.”

Rules for Washington Management Service, leave and Combined Fund Drive will be drafted this fall and are scheduled for adoption in spring 2005, so they can be implemented along with the other sixteen chapters on July 1, 2005. ★

### Thanks for your feedback...

Thanks to everyone who took the time to provide comments on the draft rules. Many revisions were made as a result of the feedback received.

To find out more about how the rules were developed, go to

<http://hr.dop.wa.gov/hrreform/rules.htm>

## DRAFT COMPETITIVE CONTRACTING GUIDANCE MANUAL UPDATE

During the month of June, the Department of General Administration received more than 300 comments on the draft competitive contracting guidance manual. Comments included recommendations for improvement, but were generally favorable. The Department will use the feedback to make necessary revisions.

The nine-chapter guidance manual is arranged to match the process for competitive contracting. Respondents from state agencies, employee unions and businesses said the manual did a good overall job of explaining the elements of competitive contracting.

The final guidance manual will be available fall 2004. ★

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## WHY REFORM THE CIVIL SERVICE SYSTEM?

In response to the legislature's passage of the Personnel System Reform Act in 2002, the Department of Personnel is leading the way towards a more progressive civil service system.

The new rules that will be adopted July 29, together with the new job classification structure, will result in modern human resource practices that focus less on process and regulation and more on supporting the efforts of state employees to provide quality services to the citizens.

### What's wrong with the old system?

The current personnel rules and processes are based on a system that was created more than 43 years ago. Over the years, layer upon layer of new rules and job classes have been tacked on in an effort to keep pace with changing issues and workforce needs.

During the same time, the needs and expectations of the state, the workforce and citizens have changed dramatically. The civil service system simply hasn't been able to keep up.

"For years now, employees, managers, and job applicants have been telling us how frustrated they are with the system. It's too complicated and takes too long to do just about anything," says Gene Matt, director of the Department of Personnel. "The system is too restrictive to meet the needs of state government's fast-paced, dynamic work environment."

### What are the benefits of the new system?

Personnel reform gives the state the opportunity to not only fix the problems with the old system, but to build a whole new streamlined system.

"While the process of change is seldom easy, the results will be worth it," adds Matt. "In the end, state government, the people who make it work, the people who receive the services, and the people who pay the bills will all benefit from a better system."

Results of civil service reform include:

- ★ More career opportunities. Employees will have more job mobility and advancement opportunity.
- ★ Better tools and greater accountability for fair and effective performance management.
- ★ More flexibility to meet changing business needs. Employers will be able to better match personnel with the work to be done.

The new civil service system will fully cover employees who are not in bargaining units. Some aspects may be superseded by collective bargaining agreements for those who are in bargaining units.

Citizens and state employees will be the ultimate winners when our state workforce – already one of the best in the nation – has a personnel system that fully supports high-performance, responsive public service. ★

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## GEARING UP FOR TRAINING ON THE NEW COMPUTER SYSTEM

**In just four months**, the first group of state employees will be using the new Human Resource Management System (HRMS) to perform personnel and payroll related tasks. By March of next year, more than 2000 state employees from virtually all state agencies, boards and commissions will be using the new system. Though the new computer system will capture the same data and perform many of the same routines as the old personnel/payroll computer system, it will not look or feel the same, and it will be able to do much more.

"The training program is a key part of HRMS implementation," agree Tammy Wood and Kristie Clark, both of whom worked as Department of Personnel trainers prior to joining the HRMS Project as training coordinators. For the last several months they have worked with consultants from Accenture, the primary contractor for the project, to develop and fine tune a training plan that will meet the state's needs. Accenture has broad experience in implementations like HRMS and is using their training center in Cincinnati to develop materials tailored specifically for Washington State's training needs.

State employees who will be using HRMS will get their first view of the new system at the HRMS End-User Forum scheduled for August 24, 25, and 26 at The Evergreen State College. "However," Wood points out, "classroom training will begin in October, with more specialized classes planned for November and December. Training is most effective when it occurs just before putting it to work."

The specific training employees will receive depends upon the role they are assigned by their agency. For example, someone who will enter payroll information may need different training than someone who will perform basic timekeeping functions (such as entering vacation leave). Most agencies will complete role assignment activities by the end of July. Depending on an employee's role, training can take from 8 to 26 classroom hours.

In the meantime, Wood and Clark are firming up their curriculum and course schedules, and pulling together a training team. It is expected that trainers will be drawn from other state agencies. Many trainers will initially be involved in testing the new system, which will give them hands-on experience.

Training for employees who will use the new system will be offered in four locations: Seattle, Spokane, Yakima, and Olympia. Schedules were developed to avoid interference with key business processes, such as payroll and retirement cut-offs. HRMS will be implemented in two groups. Agencies in Group 1 begin training in October towards using the new system in December 2004. Training for Group 2 will start in January, so that employees will be ready to begin using the system by March 2005.

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